SOUTHEAST ALASKA DRIFT GILLNET FISHERY

MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2000

By
Southeast Region Management Staff

Regional Information Report No. [1]1J00-19

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Commercial Fisheries
Southeast Region
Juneau, Alaska

April 2000

[1] The Regional Information Report Series was established in 1987 to provide an information access system for all unpublished divisional reports. These reports frequently serve diverse ad hoc informational purposes or archive basic uninterpreted data. To accommodate timely reporting of recently collected information, reports in this series undergo only limited internal review and may contain preliminary data; this information may be subsequently finalized and published in the formal literature. Consequently, these reports should not be cited without prior approval of the author or the Division of Commercial Fisheries.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION

This management plan provides an overview of the expected salmon run sizes, management issues, and harvest strategies for the Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fisheries in 2000.

There are approximately 480 limited entry permits in the Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fishery of which over 95% are actively fished each year. Drift gillnet landings have averaged approximately 2.6 million salmon annually from 1960 to 1998. Of the total commercial salmon harvest in Southeast Alaska, the drift gillnet fishery harvests an average of 38% of the sockeye, 20% of the chum, 12% of the coho, 4% of the pink, and 4% of the chinook salmon.

The drift gillnet fishery primarily targets sockeye, pink, and summer chum salmon during the summer season and coho and fall chum salmon during the fall season. Chinook salmon are usually harvested incidentally, although some targeted chinook salmon fisheries are allowed in terminal hatchery areas in the spring. Currently, there are no directed drift gillnet fisheries for natural stocks of chinook salmon in Southeast Alaska.

There are five drift gillnet fishing areas in Southeast Alaska: District 1 (Tree Point and Portland Canal), District 6 (Prince of Wales), District 8 (Stikine), District 11 (Taku-Snettisham), and District 15 (Lynn Canal). In addition, drift gillnet fisheries occur in several terminal areas adjacent to hatchery facilities. Each of these gillnet fisheries are discussed separately in this management plan.

2000 BOARD OF FISHERY GILLNET ACTIONS

The Alaska Board of Fisheries met in Sitka in February, 2000 to consider proposals, among others, related to Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fishery. Several proposals were passed that will modify commercial gillnet fishery regulations. A brief summary of these actions is provided here, for more detailed information contact local area management staff and obtain updated regulation booklets as they become available.

Summary of changes/additions to regulations related to the Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fishery at the February, 2000 Alaska Board of Fishery meeting:

- 5 AAC 33.331 Gillnet specification and operation. Minimum drift gillnet length restrictions repealed.
- 5 AAC 33.310 (c)(2)(B) Fishing seasons and periods for net gear. Increased fishing time for drift gillnets in an area in Section 6-D along the Screen Island shoreline.
- 5 AAC 33.376 Deep Inlet Terminal Harvest Management Plan. Minor, housekeeping modifications to Terminal Hatchery Area boundary lines.
- 5 AAC 40.032 Douglas Island Pink and Chum (DIPAC) Special Harvest Areas. Placed Speel Arm Special Harvest Area into regulation.
- 5 AAC 33.XXX Snettisham Hatchery Management Plan. Placed into regulation Snettisham Hatchery Management Plan.

SALMON RETURNS

In Southeast Alaska, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) issues a region-wide preseason return forecast only for pink salmon. Otherwise, the projected returns of sockeye, chum, and coho salmon presented in this management plan are strictly qualitative and should not be considered official department forecasts. The return projections are calculated primarily from parent-year catch and escapement data and are expressed in terms of probable magnitude of return relative to historic levels.

Returns of natural and hatchery produced summer chum salmon stocks are anticipated to be average in most areas. Returns of hatchery-produced, summer chum salmon are expected to contribute significantly to the District 1, 11, and 15 gillnet fisheries. Poor returns of fall chum salmon are expected to the Taku/Snettisham and Lynn Canal fisheries. Overall, returns of coho salmon should be above average due in part, to significant hatchery contributions. The total, all-gear pink salmon harvest is expected to be strong with a regional harvest of approximately 36 to 50 million fish. The major portion of this harvest will be taken by purse seine gear.

MANAGEMENT APPROACH

A flexible management approach is required because of the lack of accurate preseason forecasts for salmon returns to the drift gillnet fishing areas. Thus, this management plan presents only a general outlook of how the season is expected to develop. Some specific management approaches may be altered depending on inseason assessments of salmon run strength. Gillnetters are encouraged to contact department management staff listed at the end of this plan for more detailed information.

The primary objectives for management of the 2000 drift gillnet fishery are:

1. Obtain overall salmon spawning escapement goals with the best possible distribution to all systems.
2. Provide for an orderly fishery while harvesting those fish in excess of escapement needs.
3. Promote the harvest and processing of good quality fish within the constraints dictated by run size.
4. Manage for a total Southeast drift gillnet catch of 7,600 chinook salmon, exclusive of Alaska hatchery-produced fish [5 AAC 33.367. (a)(2)].
5. Minimize, to the extent possible, the interception of salmon destined for locations where weak returns are expected.
6. Manage District 1, 6, 8, and 11 drift gillnet fisheries consistent with the provisions of the U.S/Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty.

Achievement of these management objectives will be accomplished by inseason adjustments of fishing time and area to control harvests in specific areas in accordance with salmon run strength and timing. Comparisons of current-year fishing performance to historical fishing success (i.e., catch per unit effort, or CPUE analysis) are a major component of inseason run strength assessment. This approach assumes catch rates are an accurate reflection of run strength by time period and can be relied upon to indicate salmon escapements through the fishing area.

Past experience has demonstrated that management of salmon fisheries based only on fishery performance (CPUE) data can be misleading, especially for mixed-stock fisheries. Therefore, other available run-strength

indicators will also be used including spawning escapements, stock composition estimates, test fishing, observed salmon concentrations in sanctuary areas, catches from other fisheries, and salmon run timing models.

The increasing availability of hatchery-produced salmon, in particular coho and summer chum salmon, has become a major factor in the management of the Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fisheries. Where inseason management is based on fishery performance, it may be difficult to gauge natural stock run strength if significant numbers of hatchery fish are present in the catch. Where possible, the hatchery component of the catch will be separated when evaluating fishery performance.

Weekly Fishing Announcements

Inseason management of the District 1 drift gillnet fishery is conducted by the Ketchikan area management staff; Districts 6 and 8 by the Petersburg and Wrangell area staff; District 11 by the Juneau area staff; and District 15 by the Haines area staff. Because permit holders can move freely among all drift gillnet fisheries, the Juneau regional office will coordinate weekly fishing announcements for all areas. These will normally be released simultaneously in all area offices by mid-afternoon each Thursday during the fishing season.

Weekly Fishing Periods

Weekly fishing periods can generally be expected to begin on Sunday at 12:01 p.m. Exceptions include the Northern and Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association's (NSRAA & SSRAA) terminal fisheries in Deep Inlet, Nakat Inlet, and Earl West Cove, where rotational harvest plans for drift gillnet, seine, and troll fisheries will apply.

U.S./CANADA PACIFIC SALMON TREATY

The U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) will influence management of the District 1, 6, 8, and 11 drift gillnet fisheries. The management provisions specified by the PST will be considered separately under the specific management plan for each respective fishery. Gillnetters are encouraged to contact local department staff for more detailed information concerning Alaska's PST obligations under the ten-year agreement signed in 1999.

CHINOOK SALMON CATCH

Regulation 5 AAC 33.367. (a)(2), specifies a catch limit of 7,600 chinook salmon (exclusive of Alaska hatchery fish) for the Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fishery. The Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted this regulation to ensure that the various user groups maintain their recent-year share of the total chinook salmon harvest quota.

The need for management measures to comply with the drift gillnet harvest quota for chinook salmon will depend on inseason evaluation of chinook salmon catch rates relative to the 7,600 fish ceiling. If the need arises, nighttime fishing closures may be implemented in certain areas to reduce the incidental catch of immature, "feeder" chinook salmon. As in past years, early-season area closures may be needed to minimize the incidental harvest of mature, "spawner" chinook salmon returning to the Stikine River in District 8, the Taku River in District 11, and the Chilkat River in District 15.

TREE POINT AND PORTLAND CANAL FISHERY

Introduction

The Tree Point and Portland Canal drift gillnet fishing area consists of regulatory Sections 1-A and 1-B. This fishery targets summer chum and sockeye salmon early in the season, followed by pink salmon, and finally fall chum and coho salmon at the end of the season.

2000 Outlook

Chum salmon returns to natural spawning systems are expected to be average to most areas, based on parent-year spawning levels to systems in Boca de Quadra and Behm Canal. However, chum salmon returns to Portland Canal were well below average in 1999. The department will pay close attention to Portland Canal chum in 2000 and will take necessary management action to ensure escapement goals are met. The department will conduct aerial surveys starting in mid-June to determine the strength of returning chum salmon to these areas.

In the spring of 1999 the United States and Canada negotiated a ten-year annex for the Tree Point fishery. The new agreement calls for the following:

A. Manage the Alaskan District 1 drift gillnet fishery to :

   i. achieve an annual catch share of Nass sockeye of 13.8 percent of the Annual Allowable Harvest (AAH) of the Nass sockeye stocks that year.
   ii. carry forward from year to year annual deviations from the prescribed catch share arrangement.

The AAH each year will be calculated as the total run of adult Nass sockeye in that year less the escapement target of 200,000 fish. In the event that the actual Nass spawning escapement for the season is below the target level, the actual spawning escapement will be used in the AAH calculations.

The total run calculation includes the catches of Nass sockeye in the principle boundary area fisheries and the spawning escapement to the Nass watershed. This includes the catch of Nass sockeye in Alaskan Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 net fisheries; Canadian Areas 1, 3, 4, and 5 net fisheries and Canadian Nass inriver fisheries. Catches in other boundary area fisheries may be included as jointly agreed by the Northern Boundary Technical Committee.

Although the management intent shall be to harvest salmon at the allowable percentage AAH, it is recognized that overages and underages will occur and an accounting mechanism is required. The payback mechanism for the fishery will be based on the number of fish a party is over or under its AAH.

The management intent for the fishery shall be to return any overages to a neutral or negative balance as soon as possible. After five years of consecutive overages, a management plan must be provided to the Northern Panel with specific management actions that will eliminate the overage. The accrual of underages in not intended to allow either Alaska or Canada to modify its fishing behavior in any given year to harvest the accrued underage.

During the 1999 season the total Nass River return was estimated to be 780,000 sockeye salmon. Escapement into the Nass River was 217,550 sockeye. This allowed for a harvest at Tree Point of 80,300 fish to remain with the 13.85% AAH. However, in 1999, the proportion of Nass River sockeye in the Tree Point harvest was much higher than experienced in past years. The actual Nass River harvest at Tree Point was 130,000 or over 80% of the total Tree Point sockeye harvest. This resulted in an overage of approximately 50,000 sockeye salmon.

The department, at the time of this writing, is still formulating its management approach to the 2000 Tree Point season. However, it is recognized that a substantial reduction in early season sockeye must be taken in order to reach a neutral or negative balance within the next four to five years as prescribed by the treaty.

Early season options include a reduction from the normal four-day starting week, area reduction, a mandated 6-inch mesh size, or a combination of those options. At this time the department is contemplating a reduction in the time fished during the early portion of the season.

The Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans has a preseason expectation of 800,000 Nass River sockeye. If the 2000 forecast is accurate then the AAH for Tree Point will be approximately 83,000 sockeye. This level of harvest needs to be reduced in order to start to bring Tree Point back towards a neutral or negative balance for Nass River sockeye.

Poor escapements of sockeye salmon to Hugh Smith Lake in Boca de Quadra (District 1) continue to be a conservation concern. The interim escapement goal range for Hugh Smith sockeye is 18,000 to 35,000 fish. Harvest rates on Hugh Smith sockeye can range from 20% to 90%. The total forecasted return of Hugh Smith sockeye salmon in 2000 is 17,500. If the sockeye return to Hugh Smith is as weak as anticipated and if escapements in early July are inadequate, area or time restrictions may be implemented in early to mid-July. The duration and extent of the restrictions will be based upon observed escapement of Hugh Smith sockeye and the need to harvest surplus pink salmon stocks bound for Boca de Quadra.

Hatchery returns of summer chum, fall chum, and coho salmon to SSRAA's Nakat Inlet remote release site are expected to contribute significantly to the Tree Point gillnet fishery in 2000. The 2000 projected returns are approximately 83,000 summer chum, 32,000 fall chum, and 16,000 coho salmon. Peak chum salmon catches from these releases are expected between mid-July to mid-August for summer chum and late August to early September for fall chum and coho salmon.

The District 1 Pink Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 33.360) establishes gillnet fishing time in Section 1-B in relation to District 1 purse seine fishing time when both gear types are concurrently harvesting the same pink salmon stocks. By regulation, the plan starts on the third Sunday in July (July 16, 2000) with the following fishing time schedule:

1. When the purse seine fishery is open for any portion of one day during a fishing week, the drift gillnet fishery must be open for 48 hours during the same fishing week.
2. When the purse seine fishery is open for any portion of two days during a fishing week, the drift gillnet fishery must be open for 96 hours during the same fishing week.
3. When the purse seine fishery is open for any portion of three or more days during a fishing week, the drift gillnet fishery must be open for 120 hours during the same week.
4. Conservation concerns for other salmon species may reduce the fishing time specified in the Pink Salmon Management Plan.

Management Goals

Management goals for the 2000 Tree Point drift gillnet fishery are as follows:

1. Manage the fishery in accordance within the Pink Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 33.360).
2. Manage the fishery consistent with the current provisions of the PST (5 AAC 33.361).

Management Plan

The Tree Point gillnet fishery will open by regulation in Section 1-B for a two or three day fishing period beginning 12:01 p.m., Sunday, June 18, 2000. The duration of subsequent fishing periods, through mid-July, will be based on the need to stay with the 13.85% of the AAH of Nass River sockeye, and to start to bring 1999's sockeye overage back to a neutral or negative balance. It is not anticipated that the overage from the 1999 season will be brought back to a neutral or negative balance in its entirety in 2000.

It is anticipated that early season reductions at Tree Point this year can be offset to some extent by additional fishing time in Neets Bay in mid-June to early July. SSRAA anticipates large returns of summer chums in 2000 and expects at least two rotational fisheries in Neets Bay. Fishing opportunities in Neets Bay are described in more detail in the **TERMINAL HATCHERY FISHERIES** portion of this Management Plan.

As in recent years, the catch of hatchery-produced, summer chum salmon returning to the Nakat Inlet release site will not be included in the evaluation of natural stock fishery performance. The contribution of Nakat Inlet chum salmon will be estimated by inseason analysis of coded-wire-tag data. Hatchery chum salmon have contributed as much as 71% of weekly catches at Tree Point and as much as 31% of the total harvest in recent years.

The PST requires that interception of natural stocks of chum salmon returning to Portland Canal streams be minimized to ensure rebuilding of these stocks. As a result no fishing should be expected in Section 1-A for Portland Canal chum salmon unless it is determined that a harvestable surplus exists. Any management decision to fish Portland Canal must assume there is sufficient additional surplus fish to support a Canadian as well as an Alaskan fishery.

The Section 1-B gillnet fishery will be managed according to the District 1 Pink Salmon Management Plan starting July 18. The overall pink salmon returns to southern Southeast Alaska is expected to be strong in 2000. If the returns come in as predicted then beginning in mid-July though the end of August, Tree Point gillnetters can anticipate four- and five-day fishing periods. The department is unlikely in 2000 to make changes in the District 1 Pink Salmon Management Plan in order to comply with the provision of the PST.

By the third week in July, when the District 1 Pink Salmon Management begins, approximately 75% of the annual sockeye harvest has already occurred.

Fall management at Tree Point starts after the end of the pink salmon season. During the fall season, the Tree Point fishery targets primarily on fall chum and coho salmon. Little is known about the stock composition of the chum and coho salmon harvest at this time of the year. However, if the estimated exploitation rate of the Hugh Smith Lake coho salmon stock, which reaches 80% in some years (average 67% since 1982), holds true for adjacent areas then wild coho stocks in the surrounding Tree Point area may benefit from a closing date at Tree Point of approximately September 20. Due to the uncertainties of the escapement levels of the stocks being harvested, the documented high exploitation rate of Hugh Smith Lake coho salmon, and the high preponderance of hatchery fish in the harvest, the department will continue to take a conservative approach to the fall season at Tree Point. However, fishing periods may be allowed after September 20 if fisheries performance data indicates above average returns of wild chum and coho salmon.

Increased hatchery production of fall chum and coho salmon from the Nakat Inlet release site has resulted in increased effort late in the season at Tree Point. This increase in effort has likely increased harvest rates on wild stocks. In the last four years, approximately 50% of the fall chum and coho salmon have been hatchery fish. Nakat Inlet fish not harvested in the common property fisheries can be harvested in the Nakat Inlet Special Harvest Area, which remains open to commercial fishing through late October.

PRINCE OF WALES AND STIKINE FISHERIES

Introduction

The District-6 drift gillnet fishery occurs in the waters of northern Clarence Strait and Sumner Strait, in regulatory Sections 6-A, 6-B, and 6-C, and portions of Section 6-D. The Stikine fishery encompasses the waters of District 8 surrounding the terminus of the Stikine River. Due to their close proximity, management of these fisheries is interrelated, resulting in some major stocks being subject to harvest by both fisheries. Two distinct management areas exist within each district; the Frederick Sound (Section 8-A) and Wrangell (Section 8-B) portions of District 8, and the Sumner Strait (Section 6-A) and Clarence Strait (Sections 6-B, 6-C, and 6-D) portions of District 6. Terminal hatchery fisheries for harvesting returns to the Crystal Lake (ADF&G) and Earl West Cove (SSRAA) hatchery facilities will be discussed in the **TERMINAL HATCHERY FISHERIES** portion of this management plan.

Management Goals

Management goals for the District-6 and District-8 gillnet fisheries for the 2000 season are as follows:

1. Minimize the catch of Tahltan Lake sockeye salmon while harvesting enhanced Tuya Lake sockeye.
2. Minimize the interception of chinook salmon returning to the Stikine River while harvesting sockeye returning to the Stikine River.
3. Obtain pink salmon spawning escapement goals in District 6 and District 7.
4. Maintain spawning escapement goals of sockeye salmon in local Alaskan systems while harvesting increased numbers of enhanced sockeye returning to the Stikine River.
5. Manage the District 6 and District 8 gillnet fisheries consistent with the provisions of the Pacific Salmon Treaty (5 AAC 33.361).

2000 Outlook

The 2000 Stikine River sockeye salmon return is expected to be lower than the past five years and decreased fishing time is expected. The returns of the Tahltan Lake sockeye and the Tuya Lake enhanced sockeye are expected to be similar to the 1999 returns and will be below the 1990-99 average. Mainstem sockeye stocks are expected to be greater than 1999 and above the long-term average. Due to the near identical return timing of the Tahltan Lake and Tuya Lake stocks, the open fishing periods in District 8, and to a limited extent in District 6, will be determined by the actual inseason abundance of the wild Tahltan Lake stock. The returns of local area sockeye stocks may be lower than the past two years. Parent-year escapements into Salmon Bay, Red Bay, Luck Lake, and Thoms Lake were lower than the previous two years. If large sockeye catches do not occur during and after the third week in July, extensions or three-day openings in District 6 should be not be anticipated. Returns of four-year-old sockeye to remote release facilities at Burnett Inlet and Neck Lake are expected to be 40,000 and 15,000, respectively. However, because these returns will be made up of small fish it is not anticipated they will contribute significantly to the sockeye catch in District 6.

Above average pink salmon returns are forecast for District 6 spawning streams and extended fishing periods near the beginning of August are likely. Parent-year escapements to District 6 were variable but generally good to excellent. Because the District 6 gillnet fishery occurs in a major migration corridor and returns are harvested in mixed stock fisheries prior to entering District 6, it is difficult to anticipate local availability. No directed fishing occurs on chum salmon in either district. Chum salmon are caught incidentally in fisheries for sockeye, pink, and coho salmon. It is anticipated that the chum catches will be somewhat lower in District 6 and significantly lower in District 8 than for the past four to five years. The returns of chum salmon to the former Burnett Inlet Hatchery facilities in Burnett Inlet and Anita Bay are expected to be approximately 90% lower than in 1999. This is the last year of chum returns from those release sites and will be made up of five-year-old fish. Summer chum production from Ketchikan area hatcheries and the Earl West Cove releases are expected to be approximately double the 1999 production. Chum salmon returning to the Ketchikan area facilities migrate through Districts 6 and are expected to contribute significantly to the chum salmon harvests in this district.

Coho salmon returns for 2000 are expected to be slightly higher than in 1999. The SSRAA summer coho remote release sites at Neck Lake and Burnett Inlet in upper Clarence Strait are expecting returns of approximately 160,000 and 17,800 fish respectively. The 1999 projected return to these facilities was 136,400. However, because the Neck Lake project has had only two years of returns, it is not currently

possible to make accurate survival projections for this group of fish. Approximately 370,000 fall coho are projected to return to enhancement projects in the Ketchikan area, which is 80,000 fewer than were projected for 1999.

Wild coho returns for 2000 are expected to be below the 1990-1999 average. The smolt emigration appeared good but the jack return was below average. Extended fishing periods in Districts 6 or 8 are not anticipated during the directed coho fisheries after statistical week 35 (last week in August). However, actual fishing periods will be determined weekly, inseason based on coho catch rates.

Management Plan

The sockeye salmon fishery in both districts will be managed in accordance with the Transboundary Rivers (TBR) Annex of the PST. The Annex allows the District 6 fishery to be managed for harvesting local Alaskan sockeye salmon stocks and is not influenced under most conditions by the presence of sockeye salmon stocks of Stikine River origin. Management of the District 8 fishery will be based on the need to harvest sockeye salmon of Stikine River origin as allowed by the sharing provisions of the TBR Annex and the conservation of the resource. The 2000 Stikine River returns, specifically returns to Tahltan Lake, are not anticipated to be strong enough to fulfill PST obligations and also allow significant fishing time in District 8. If the return of Tahltan sockeye is similar to or less than the 1999 return, no mid-week openings in District 8 or fishery extensions in either Districts 6 or 8 should be expected for at least the first five weeks of the fishery.

The season will start at 12:01 p.m. on Sunday, June 18 for a 48-hour open period in Districts 6 and 8. During the first opening only the outer portions of District 8 will be open to evaluate the run strength of Stikine River sockeye and the availability of chinook salmon. Subsequent openings will be determined inseason based on catches and stock composition data. If the Tahltan stock returns at the expected low level, mid-week openings in District 8 or fishing period extensions in District 6 are not expected to occur during the first five weeks and the total closure of District 8 could occur if the return is significantly lower than expected. If inseason stock composition data indicates a larger than expected return then more liberal fishing periods may be allowed.

Management actions during the sockeye salmon fishing season will be based on analysis of CPUE and stock identification data to determine the availability of Stikine River fish. These stock abundance indicators, along with fishery performance and stock composition data obtained from Canadian commercial, test, and subsistence fisheries, will be incorporated into a Stikine sockeye management model. As the season progresses, this model will be the primary method used to estimate the availability of sockeye for harvest by the Alaskan fishery in District 8 and the Canadian inriver fisheries. Any conservation measures required for Stikine River sockeye salmon will first be implemented in District 8, followed by Sumner Strait in District 6. Mid-week openings will be used when additional fishing time is needed. Reductions in fishing time or area or district-wide closures will be used when conservation measures are needed. All openings will be based upon the most recent Stikine sockeye model update and the current weekly sockeye harvest. In order to adjust the mid-week period to best follow the most current catch data, announcements for the mid-week opening will be made on the fishing grounds by 10:00 a.m. of the last day of the regular fishery opening. Open area and fishing time may not necessarily be the same as the general weekly opening if adjustments are needed to reduce chinook salmon catches or adjust fishing times.

The area adjacent to the Stikine River mouth, and other milling areas for Stikine River chinook salmon in District 8, will be closed during the early portions of the sockeye season to reduce the incidental harvest of Stikine River chinook. As the season progresses the restrictions will generally be reduced. If areas of high

concentrations of chinook are identified during initial weekly openings they may be closed during any subsequent openings. To avoid harvesting chinook salmon, the Stikine flats will not open until the first Sunday in July.

Pink salmon should begin entering District 6 in significant numbers by the third or fourth week of July. The early portion of the pink salmon fishery will be managed primarily on CPUE. By mid-August, pink salmon destined for local systems will begin to enter the fishery in greater numbers and at that time management will be based on observed escapements. If returns are not evenly dispersed throughout the district, area restrictions may be necessary.

The coho salmon season will occur during late August and early September. Management of the District 6 fishery will be based predominantly on wild stock CPUE. Enhanced coho from Crystal Lake Hatchery, the Earl West Cove remote release site, the Neck Lake remote release site, and other enhancement facilities in the Ketchikan area all contribute significant numbers of fish to the District 6 and District 8 fisheries. Inseason estimates from coded microwire tag recovery data will be used to identify the hatchery component of the catch. Only the catch of wild coho will be used for fishery performance evaluation.

Regulation 5 AAC 33.310.(c)(2)(B) allows gillnetting along the Screen Island shore of Section 6-D only during the early and late portions of the season. Specifically, this area encompasses those waters of Section 6-D west of a line from Mariposa Rock Buoy to the northernmost tip of Point Harrington to a point on the shore of Etolin Island at 56°09'35" N. latitude, 132°42'42" W. longitude to the southernmost tip of Point Stanhope. Actions by the Board of Fisheries, based on an agreement between gillnet and purse seine representatives at the board meeting in February 2000, increased the fishing time for gillnetting in this area by one week on each end of the closure. The periods when fishing may be allowed are now: 1) from the second Sunday in June (June 11) through the first Saturday in August (August 5) and, 2) from the first Sunday in September (September 3) until the season is closed. During this time, gillnetting is allowed during the same time periods that the adjoining waters of Section 6-C are open.

TAKU/SNETTISHAM GILLNET FISHERY

Introduction

The Taku/Snettisham (District 11) gillnet area encompasses Section 11-B (Taku Inlet, Port Snettisham, and Stephens Passage north of Midway Island) and Section 11-C (Midway Island south to a line from Point League to Point Hugh). This fishery has traditionally targeted sockeye salmon during the early portion of the season and fall chum and coho salmon later in the season.

2000 Outlook

Taku River sockeye salmon escapements averaged 103,000 fish (range 92,600 to 113,700) in the 1994 to 1996 parent-years, very close to the recent 10-year average escapement of 102,400. Taku sockeye salmon runs have been below average during the last three years, but healthy returns of 4-year-old fish in 1999 may indicate improved returns this year. Returns from the joint U.S./Canada Tatsamenie Lake sockeye salmon project (Taku River drainage) are expected to contribute few fish to the harvest in 2000. Returns of wild Port Snettisham sockeye salmon are difficult to project because escapement enumeration programs were not

in place during all parent-years. Enhanced sockeye salmon returns to Port Snettisham are expected to total approximately 230,000 fish this year. Almost all of these enhanced fish are expected to be four-year-olds and should weigh 4 to 5 pounds apiece.

Returns of hatchery summer chum salmon to the District 11 area are expected to be good. Approximately 979,000 summer chum salmon are expected to return in 2000 from Douglas Island Pink and Chum, Inc. (DIPAC) hatchery releases in Gastineau Channel. Returns from Limestone Inlet remote releases are anticipated to total nearly 203,000 fish. The Taku River fall chum salmon run is expected to be poor.

Returns of Taku River coho salmon have been much lower during the last three years than between 1990 and 1996. Parent-year escapements of coho salmon in Canadian portions of the Taku River in 1996 (44,600) and 1997 (38,900) were well below average but were adequate to produce good returns under favorable environmental conditions. Very good catches of coho salmon smolts in the department's Taku River juvenile coded-wire-tagging program during the spring of 1999 are believed to reflect increased smolt production from the drainage and could indicate improved adult returns this year. DIPAC projects a return of 78,000 enhanced coho salmon in 2000 from smolt releases in Gastineau Channel.

Returns of pink salmon to District 11 streams are expected to be variable in 2000. Parent-year escapements in the Taku River, lower Stephens Passage, and Seymour Canal were very good but escapements to streams north of the Taku River in Stephens Passage and lower Lynn Canal were below average. Approximately 288,000 pink salmon are projected to return from DIPAC fry releases into Gastineau Channel.

The Taku River chinook salmon run in 2000 is expected to be above levels of the last two years. The 1993 and 1994 brood years of Taku River chinook produced poor returns and the escapement goal of 30,000 to 55,000 large (ocean age 3+) fish was not achieved in 1999 for the first time in over a decade. Although a preseason forecast is not yet available, returns-to-date of chinook from the 1995 and 1996 brood years indicate improved production.

Management Goals

Management goals for the 2000 Taku/Snettisham drift gillnet fishery are as follows:

1. Provide for sufficient salmon spawning escapements to Taku River, Port Snettisham, and Stephens Passage streams while harvesting those fish in excess of escapement needs.
2. Minimize, to the extent practical, the incidental harvest of feeder chinook salmon to stay within the Board of Fisheries Southeast drift gillnet allocation of 7,600 non-Alaska Hatchery chinook salmon.
3. Manage the fishery consistent with current provisions of the PST (5 AAC 33.361). New long-term harvest sharing agreements for Taku River sockeye and coho salmon were negotiated and are specified in the new Pacific Salmon Treaty agreement that was finalized last winter.
4. Maximize the harvest of hatchery-produced chum salmon returning to the Limestone Inlet remote release site while minimizing the incidental harvest of Port Snettisham wild sockeye salmon.
5. Manage returns of enhanced Port Snettisham sockeye salmon consistent with the new Board of Fisheries Snettisham Hatchery Management Plan.

Management Plan

The District 11 commercial gillnet fishery will be managed in accordance with the Transboundary River (TBR) Annex of the PST. Harvest sharing arrangements for sockeye and coho salmon through the 2008 fishing season are specified in the new Annex. The Canadian inriver gillnet fishery is allocated 18% of the total allowable catch (TAC) of wild sockeye salmon originating from Canadian portions of the drainage, and can harvest 20% of inriver escapements above 100,000 sockeye salmon. Harvests of sockeye salmon produced from joint U.S./Canada enhancement programs in the Taku River drainage are to be shared equally by the two countries. For coho salmon, the new annex calls for the United States to manage its fisheries to achieve a minimum above-border run size of 38,000 coho salmon. In addition, incidental harvests of coho salmon in the Canadian directed sockeye salmon fishery are allowed and directed harvests of 3,000 to 10,000 coho salmon are allowed depending on inriver run size.

The District 11 fishery will be managed through mid-August primarily on the basis of sockeye salmon abundance. Run strength will be evaluated using fishery catch and CPUE data and weekly inriver run size estimates derived from the Taku River fish wheel mark-recapture project operated by ADF&G at Canyon Island. Contribution of enhanced stocks of sockeye salmon will be estimated during the season by analysis of salmon otoliths sampled from the commercial harvests. The age and stock compositions of the harvest of wild sockeye salmon will be estimated after the fishing season by analysis of scale pattern and parasite incidence data from commercial catch samples.

Section 11-B will open by regulation on the third Sunday in June (June 18) for a 3-day fishing period. Fishing time in subsequent weeks will depend on developing run strength. The department plans to manage the fishery in Taku Inlet aggressively early in the season to harvest expected surpluses of early- migrating Taku River sockeye salmon stocks. Fishing time in Taku Inlet may be limited from late July through mid-August, when Tatsamenie Lake sockeye are typically present in highest numbers, because adequate escapement is needed to fulfill broodstock requirements of the joint U.S./Canada sockeye salmon enhancement program conducted on this system.

Nighttime fishing closures may be instituted to limit incidental catches of immature chinook salmon. Harvests and CPUE of chinook in the Juneau recreational fishery prior to the opening of the gillnet fishery and catches during initial gillnet openings will be evaluated to determine the need for night closures during the 2000 season.

Returns of enhanced Snettisham sockeye salmon in 2000 are expected to be higher than in previous years of the fishery and will be managed according to the Snettisham Hatchery Management Plan, which was passed by the Board of Fisheries in February, 2000. The plan provides basic guidelines for managing enhanced sockeye salmon production from Port Snettisham including the following provisions, in order of priority:

1) Sustainable production of wild sockeye salmon from Crescent and Speel lakes.
2) Management of enhanced Snettisham sockeye returns may not prevent achieving escapement goals or PST harvest sharing agreements for Taku River salmon stocks.
3) Assessment programs shall be conducted to estimate Snettisham wild sockeye stock escapements and contributions of enhanced sockeye to the District 11 commercial fisheries.
4) Common property harvests in the Speel Arm SHA shall be conducted by limiting time and area to protect wild sockeye salmon returns.

Peak migration timing of enhanced Snettisham sockeye salmon through Stephens Passage is expected to be between late July and mid-August. Management of the Stephens Passage area will focus on conservation of

Snettisham wild sockeye salmon runs particularly during July. The department expects to implement much more extensive use of six-inch minimum mesh size restrictions in Section 11-B south of Circle Point than in recent years to limit harvest rates on wild sockeye runs while allowing harvest of enhanced chum salmon returning to Limestone Inlet. Outer portions of Limestone Inlet may be opened during July to allow additional access to enhanced chum salmon. Mesh restrictions in Stephens Passage are expected to be relaxed beginning the last week of July or early August. Port Snettisham will remain closed inside a line from Point Anmer to Point Styleman through late July or early August. Commercial openings inside Port Snettisham may occur after this time if wild stock escapements are developing adequately.

Common property fishery openings may occur in DIPAC's Speel Arm SHA, which is located in waters of Speel Arm north of 58°03'25" N. latitude. The SHA was established in regulation by the Board of Fisheries at the February, 2000 meeting. Commercial openings in the SHA will depend on DIPAC's progress toward brood stock and cost recovery goals and the sockeye salmon escapement to Speel Lake; fishery decisions for the SHA will be made jointly by the department and DIPAC.

A personal use fishery will again be allowed in Sweetheart Creek to ensure enhanced salmon returns to the site are fully utilized. Sweetheart Creek is blocked to anadromous fish migration several hundred yards upstream from the mouth. The Sweetheart Creek personal use fishery will be open seven days per week in 2000 and some increased recreational vessel traffic may be expected in Stephens Passage.

Pink salmon will be harvested in Section 11-B incidental to the sockeye and enhanced summer chum salmon fisheries. Fishing time for pink salmon in Section 11-C will depend on the strength of returns in lower Stephens Passage, Seymour Canal, and the northern portions of District 10. Parent-year pink salmon escapements in Stephens Passage and Seymour Canal were excellent and some surplus to escapement needs may occur.

Beginning in mid-August management of the Taku/Snettisham gillnet fishery will be based on the run strength of coho and fall chum salmon. Inseason management will be based on evaluation of the fishery catch, effort, and CPUE relative to historical levels, inriver run size estimates from the Taku River mark-recapture project, and recovery of coded-wire-tagged wild Taku River and hatchery coho salmon in marine fisheries. Coho salmon is the primary species managed during the fall season but area and time restrictions may be necessary to further protect the weaker fall chum salmon returns.

In order to avoid gear conflicts, the District 11 drift gillnet fishery will not be open concurrent with the 2000 Juneau Golden North Salmon Derby. Consequently, during statistical week 35, the District 11 gillnet fishery will not open until Monday, August 21.

LYNN CANAL FISHERY

Introduction

The Lynn Canal drift gillnet fishery operates in the waters of District 15. The district is divided into three regulatory sections: 15-A (upper Lynn Canal), 15-B (Berners Bay), and 15-C (lower Lynn Canal). The Lynn Canal drift gillnet fishery targets sockeye, summer chum, coho, and fall chum salmon. Chinook and pink salmon are taken incidentally.

Sockeye salmon are mainly targeted from June through early September. The primary stocks originate in Chilkat and Chilkoot lakes, Berners Bay rivers, and mainstem spawning areas of the Chilkat River. Both the Chilkat and Chilkoot Lake sockeye populations have early and late-run stock components with separate escapement goals.

Hatchery and wild summer chum salmon are harvested from late June through early August and fall chum and coho salmon are targeted from September through mid-October. The primary fall chum salmon stocks originate in the Klehini and Chilkat rivers and the primary coho salmon stocks originate in the Chilkat and Berners Bay rivers.

Chinook salmon are harvested incidentally in the Lynn Canal drift gillnet fishery. A management concern for this species is to minimize chinook salmon harvests to stay within the Board of Fisheries allocation of all-gear quota (7,600 chinook for all Southeast gillnet districts).

2000 Outlook

The 1994 Chilkat Lake mark-recapture sockeye salmon escapement estimate totaled 153,500 sockeye salmon, including 43,900 early run fish, and 109,600 late run fish, well above the desired upper escapement goals for both stocks. The 1995 Chilkat Lake mark-recapture escapement estimate was 184,500 sockeye salmon, including 89,000 early run fish, and 95,500 late run fish, again exceeding the desired escapement goal range for both stocks. Sockeye salmon smolt production from Chilkat Lake in 1997, the dominant smolt year for the 2000 return to Chilkat Lake, totaled an estimated 1.51 million fish or 74% of the historical (1989-1990, 1994-1999) average. Smolt production in 1998 was also below average, totaling an estimated 1.39 million fish. Below average smolt abundance was due in large part to poor in-lake survival from the 1995 brood year. Based on standard marine survival and average adult age composition assumptions, a return of approximately 148,500 Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon is expected in 2000, 68% of the 1976-99 average.

It is difficult to project total returns for stocks spawning in the Chilkat River mainstem and Berners Bay drainages because data is not as comprehensive as for Chilkat Lake. The estimated escapement (based on mark-recapture techniques) of Chilkat River mainstem sockeye salmon was approximately 53,400 in 1996 and 14,700 in 1997, the dominant parental brood years. The 1996 estimate was the largest on record, although estimates are available only since 1994. Total escapement estimates are not available for Berners Bay sockeye systems. The average (1976 to 1999) District 15 commercial gillnet catch of Chilkat mainstem/Berners Bay sockeye salmon is 13,000 fish. Based on this information and a high return of three-year old Chilkat mainstem fish in 1999, an above average return of Chilkat River mainstem sockeye salmon is expected in 2000.

The Chilkoot Lake sockeye escapement during the dominant parental brood year (1995) for the 2000 return was 7,200 fish (1,700 early run and 5,500 late run), the lowest on record. Both the early and late run escapements were well below desired escapement goal ranges. Zooplankton abundance in Chilkoot Lake in 1996, when the majority of fry expected to return as adults in 2000 were rearing in the lake, was very low but was improved from levels measured in 1995. The 1996 hydroacoustic estimate of fall fry abundance in Chilkoot Lake was improved from 1995 but was the second lowest on record (421,000, range 286,000 to 3,066,000 for years 1987-1991 and 1995-1999). The annual adult return of Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon has been well below average since 1993, a trend that is expected to continue in 2000.

Douglas Island Pink and Chum Salmon Incorporated (DIPAC) is again expecting large numbers of hatchery summer chum salmon to return to the Amalga Harbor and Boat Harbor remote release sites. Preliminary projections for the Boat Harbor return are approximately 139,000 fish. No hatchery cost recovery fishery is planned for the Boat Harbor area so these fish will all be available for common property fishery harvest. The preliminary projection for the Amalga Harbor project is approximately 1,195,000 fish. DIPAC will conduct a hatchery cost recovery fishery in its Amalga Harbor Special Harvest Area in Section 11-A to harvest chum salmon returning to the Amalga Harbor remote release site.

Peak aerial escapement counts of summer chum salmon in Sawmill Creek in 1995, 1996, and 1997 were 1,750, 5,700 and 1,000 fish respectively. Those peak aerial escapements are within or above the desired peak aerial escapement goal for this system. Based on parental-year escapement counts, the wild summer chum return in 2000 is expected to be good but much lower in magnitude in comparison to forecasted returns of hatchery chum salmon.

Fall chum salmon returning to Lynn Canal are wild stocks migrating primarily to the Klehini River, Chilkat River, and several Chilkat River tributaries. A smaller number of fall chum are produced from Herman Creek spawning channel and streamside incubation projects carried out by NSRAA. Parental-year escapements for the 2000 return of fall chum salmon were low. Peak aerial counts in the Klehini River in 1995 and 1996 were 200 and 3,600 fish respectively, well below the peak aerial escapement goal for this stock. For the Chilkat River the peak aerial survey counts were 3,500 and 5,500 fish (1995, 1996), also well below the peak aerial escapement goal for this stock. It is known, however, that aerial escapement counts are not very reliable because of the glacial nature of the Chilkat River and the protracted spawning duration of these stocks. Another piece of information that may be used as an indication of the strength of the fall chum salmon return is the fishery performance data from Lynn Canal. The fishery performance in the dominant parental brood years (1995 and 1996) was also poor. Based on this information the return of fall chum salmon stocks is, again, expected to be poor.

The coho salmon return in Lynn Canal is comprised of several stocks. The largest coho system is the Chilkat River, followed by the Berners River and Chilkoot River. Parental-year escapement counts were generally below the ten-year average for all systems. The District 15 gillnet catch in 1996 of 52,500 coho was approximately 72% of the previous ten-year average. Based on this information the coho return is expected to be average to below average in 2000.

Sport Fish Division has, since 1991, conducted research to determine the spawning abundance of Chilkat River chinook salmon. The resulting database will be used to develop escapement goals and future run forecasting models for this run. The preliminary preseason forecast for the return of large (ocean age 3+) Chilkat River chinook salmon is 4,800 fish, which is slightly below the 1991-1999 average but above last year's estimated escapement of 2,300 fish.

Management Goals

Specific management goals for the 2000 Lynn Canal drift gillnet fishery are as follows:

1. Obtain escapement counts for early run (through week 28; July 8) and late run Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon of 16,500 and 34,000 fish, respectively.
2. Obtain an escapement of between 52,000 and 106,000 sockeye salmon to Chilkat Lake. The escapement objective for the early stock is approximately 17,500 fish through week 33 (August 12) and 47,500 for the late stock.
3. Provide for sufficient wild chum, coho, and pink salmon spawning escapements to the Chilkat, Chilkoot, and Berners Rivers and other Lynn Canal systems, while harvesting those fish in excess of escapement needs.
4. Minimize, to the extent practical, the incidental harvest of chinook salmon.

Management Plan

In 2000, the department intends to manage the Lynn Canal drift gillnet fishery to obtain the lower ends of the escapement goal ranges for early and late stocks of Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon. Depressed populations of Chilkoot Lake zooplankton that serve as the forage base for rearing juvenile sockeye salmon are believed to be limiting production from this system. The department believes targeting the low end of the escapement goal ranges is prudent to reduce the possibility of high fry production and resultant heavy predation on the lake's principal food source for sockeye salmon.

Section 15-A will open for two days south of the latitude of Seduction Point beginning 12:01 p.m., Sunday June 18. If the Chilkoot River weir count through June 13 is less than 4,500 sockeye salmon the eastern side of Section 15-A will be closed. If the weir count is 4,500 sockeye salmon or greater the eastern portion of 15-A may be opened. Chilkat Inlet will remain closed the first two weeks of the season to protect mature chinook salmon returning to the Chilkat River. Chinook salmon return timing data from the Sport Fish chinook salmon tagging program indicates that approximately 90% of the Chilkat River chinook salmon return has passed the inriver drift gillnet capture site at river mile seven by July 15. Assuming that the travel time from Chilkat Inlet to the Sport Fish Division tagging site is roughly ten days, the bulk of the Chilkat River chinook salmon return should be in the Chilkat River by about July 4 (week 28 in 2000).

The department has attempted to increase harvest rates on Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon by allowing extended fishing time and area in Chilkat Inlet and adjacent marine waters during years of high abundance. The success of this approach is limited because of terminal area closures designed to protect chinook salmon and Chilkat River mainstem sockeye early in the season and fall chum salmon late in the fishing season. Chilkat River mainstem fish have a return timing that overlaps the Chilkat Lake early sockeye salmon run. There are no formal escapement goals for Chilkat River mainstem sockeye salmon. Data from the Chilkat River fish wheel mark-recapture program will be used to judge strength inseason and escapement levels post season. The department is hopeful that this data may be used in the future to develop spawning escapement goals for this stock.

It is anticipated that the northern boundary line will remain at Seduction Point until the second or third week of the season. Depending on the strength of the early Chilkat Lake sockeye and the Chilkat River chinook salmon run, the northern boundary line may be moved to Glacier Point, or the northernmost tip

of Kochu Island, the third week of the season. If the run strengths of Chilkat Lake sockeye and Chilkat River chinook warrant it, the northern boundary line in Chilkat Inlet may be moved north to Cannery Point during weeks 29 and 30.

The area from Cannery Point to the Chilkat River mouth will be closed to protect Chilkat River mainstem sockeye salmon during weeks 29 and 30. If the Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon run is stronger than anticipated the northern boundary line may be moved to the mouth of the Chilkat River during weeks 31-34. Section 15-A (west of a line beginning at a point within two nautical miles of the western shoreline of Lynn Canal at the latitude to Point Sherman, to Sullivan Island Rock Light, to Eldred Rock Light, to the southernmost tip of Talsani Island, to the northernmost tip of Talsani Island, to Seduction Point) may be opened for extended periods of time during the summer season, but due to this year's expected smaller run of Chilkat Lake sockeye it is likely that fishing time in this area will be less than during the last three years. Fishing time and area may be adjusted inseason and will be based on inseason fishery performance and on stock assessment data, primarily from the fish wheels in the lower Chilkat River.

If the Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon return is poor as expected (run not forecasted to meet minimum escapement goals), the eastern-side of Section 15-A will be closed for much of the season. Chilkoot Inlet is expected to be closed north of Seduction Point for most, if not all, of the summer season to protect Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon.

Fall management will begin in late August or early September. Fall chum salmon conservation will drive fishery management in Section 15-A from week 35 until the end of the season. In 1999, when the late run of Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon was very strong, the department used a new management approach to the early fall fishery in Section 15-A in order to target fishing on Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon while limiting the harvest of milling Chilkat River fall chum salmon. During weeks 35 and 36 Chilkat Inlet was open from the latitude of Point Seduction to the mouth of the Chilkat River and the remainder of Section 15-A was closed. The use of this management strategy in 2000 will be assessed in season and will be based on the strength of the late run of Chilkat Lake sockeye. The department will assess sockeye and fall chum runs closely by monitoring fishery performance and inriver abundance at the Chilkat River fish wheels to adjust fishing time and area in Section 15-A during the fall.

Section 15-B will not be open in 2000 unless the return of coho salmon to Berners Bay is very strong.

Section 15-C will open for two days beginning 12:01 p.m., Sunday June 18. If the Chilkoot River weir count is less than 4,500 sockeye salmon through June 13 the eastern side of Section 15-C will be closed north of the latitude of Bridget Point. If the Chilkoot Lake salmon sockeye return is as poor as expected (based on weir counts), it is likely that there will be 6-inch minimum mesh size restrictions in Section 15-C (except for the Boat Harbor area). This gear restriction will be implemented to minimize the harvest of Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon while targeting summer hatchery chum salmon. If the Chilkoot River weir counts continue to be very poor and effort levels are higher than in recent years, it is also possible that additional areas on the eastern side of Section 15-C may be closed. The decision to open the eastern side of this section and whether to implement a gear restriction will be driven by Chilkoot River weir counts, effort levels, and inseason stock assessment data based on site specific scale samples.

The Boat Harbor area (those waters within two nautical miles of the western shoreline of Lynn Canal from the latitude of Lance Point at 58°43'56" N. latitude south to a point 2.4 miles north of Point Whidbey at 58°37'03" N. latitude) is expected to be opened for extended periods beginning in week 28, July 2. If enhanced chum salmon returns are as strong as projected, the Boat Harbor area will be open continuously beginning the first week of July. It is probable that the western shoreline of Section 15-C will be closed

north of Lance Point to protect wild summer chum salmon returning to the Endicott River during weeks 27 to 31 (June 25 to July 29).

Fall season management will begin in late August or early September in Section 15-C. A conservative management approach will again be implemented to ensure improved fall chum salmon escapement during the early weeks of the fall season. Management of Section 15-C during the fall season will be based on coho and chum overall run strength and fishing effort levels. Fishing effort will be directed at harvesting returns of coho salmon in lower Lynn Canal while conserving fall chum salmon.

To avoid gear conflicts, the District 15 drift gillnet fishery will not be open concurrent with the Juneau Golden North Salmon Derby. Consequently, during statistical week 35, the District 15 gillnet fishery will not open until Monday, August 21.

TERMINAL HATCHERY FISHERIES

For the 2000 season, drift gillnet terminal area fisheries can be expected in Deep Inlet, Nakat Inlet, Neets Bay, and Earl West Cove (Eastern Passage) to harvest salmon returning to NSRAA and SSRAA enhancement facilities, and in portions of Blind Slough to harvest coho salmon returning to the Crystal Lake Hatchery (ADF&G).

Fishers should acquaint themselves with regulations pertinent to salmon utilization [5 AAC 93.310.

Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association Terminal Area Fisheries

The terminal hatchery fishery at Deep Inlet will be managed jointly with NSRAA and according to Board of Fisheries management plans. The open gillnet fishing times will be announced by ADF&G news releases prior to, and during, the fishing season.

Terminal Area – Deep Inlet [5 AAC 33.376]

NSRAA expects a return of 3,000,000 chum salmon to the Deep Inlet remote release site and the Medvejie Hatchery in 2000. Approximately 2,600,000 chum salmon are expected to be available for common property harvest by drift gillnet, troll, and purse seine gear. The majority of this harvest can be expected to occur in the Deep Inlet THA by drift gillnet and purse seine gear, but some harvest is likely outside the THA by troll and purse seine gear as well. The NSRAA board decided at their November meeting in Sitka to reduce the number of THA openings in July in order to attain 50% of the season's cost recovery goal of 335,000 chum salmon by July 31. Accordingly, initial openings may be for two days of seine and four days of gillnet per week. Then, after returns increase, the Deep Inlet THA would be open for two gillnet days and one seine day per week in July until such time that the mid-season cost recovery goal of 167,500 fish can be assured. In August, the Deep Inlet THA will be open for drift gillnet gear each Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, for purse seine gear each Sunday and Wednesday, and for cost recovery and troll on Saturdays. Also, in order to provide for quality of fish harvested or to ensure that NSRAA cost recovery goals are met, inseason adjustments of the planned schedule might be necessary.

The Deep Inlet THA fishery is managed jointly with NSRAA and in accordance with the Deep Inlet Terminal Harvest Management Plan (5 AAC 33.376). The plan provides for the distribution of the harvest of hatchery-produced chum salmon between the purse seine and drift gillnet fleets. The ratio of gillnet fishing time to purse seine fishing time will be 2:1. Additionally, the Board of Fisheries has allowed trolling to occur when net fisheries are closed as long as trolling does not interfere with cost recovery.

The Deep Inlet terminal harvest area during the 2000 season will be as follows:

> Deep Inlet THA: Deep Inlet, Aleutkina Bay, and contiguous waters south of a line from a point west of Pirates Cove at 135°22'38" W. long., 56°59'21" N. lat. to the westernmost tip of Long Island to the easternmost tip of Long Island to the westernmost tip of Emgeten Island to the westernmost tip of Error Island to the westernmost tip of Berry Island to the southernmost tip of Berry Island to the westernmost tip of the southernmost island in the Kutchuma Island group to the easternmost tip of the southernmost island in the Kutchuma Island group to the westernmost tip of an unnamed island at 135°17'40" W. long., 57°00'18" N. lat. to a point on the southern side of the unnamed island at 135°16'47" W. long., 57°00'05" N. lat. and then to a point on the Baranof Island Shore at 135°16'32" W. long. 56°59'56" N. lat.

During the 2000 season, the boundaries of the Deep Inlet THA may be changed by NSRAA and the department to help resolve conflicts with local private landowners in the area. When chum salmon begin returning to the Deep Inlet THA in early July, the area will be open to purse seine, drift net, and troll gear as outlined in forthcoming news releases detailing the rotational fishery schedules. In early September the Deep Inlet THA boundaries may be adjusted by the department to reduce interception of wild coho salmon returning to Salmon Lake. Coho salmon harvested in the Deep Inlet THA that are not sold but are retained for personal use must be recorded on fish tickets [5 AAC 39.130 (c) (10)].

Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association Terminal Area Fisheries

The terminal hatchery fisheries at Neets Bay, Nakat Inlet and Earl West Cove (Eastern Passage) will be managed jointly with SSRAA and according to Board of Fisheries management plans. The open gillnet fishing times will be announced by ADF&G news releases prior to, and during, the fishing season.

Terminal Area – Neets Bay [5 AAC 33.370]

From the second Sunday in June through the third Sunday in July, the Neets Bay THA shall include those waters of Neets Bay east of the longitude of Chin Point to the closed waters at the head of the bay. After the third Sunday in July the Neets Bay THA consists of those waters east of the longitude of the easternmost tip of Bug Island to the closed waters at the head of the bay.

In 2000 SSRAA is expecting 2.5 to 3.0 million summer chum to return to Neets Bay. This number is expected to exceeded SSRAA's ability to harvest the run in a timely and orderly fashion. Therefore, SSRAA, in cooperation with the Fish and Game Department, is anticipating at least two rotational openings in mid-June to early July for the gillnet and purse seine fleet. The first rotational fishery will be opened in coordination with any early season restrictions at Tree Point. For example if the first week at Tree Point is reduced to a 2-day week (Sunday through Tuesday) Neets Bay would open to gillnetting for 48 hours beginning at 12:00 noon on Wednesday, June 21. The exact times for early season opportunities

will be announced by news release as soon as the final decision on the early portion of Tree Point's season is made.

Terminal Area - Nakat Inlet [5 AAC 33.372]

The Nakat Inlet drift gillnet fishing area includes the waters of Nakat Inlet between 54°50'00" N. latitude and 54°56'00" N. latitude. In 2000, approximately 83,000 summer chum, 32,000 fall chum, and 16,000 coho salmon are expected to return to Nakat Inlet.

Terminal Area - Eastern Passage [5 AAC 33.373]

The Eastern Passage (Earl West Cove) drift gillnet fishing area includes the waters of Eastern Passage south of 56°24'50" N. latitude and west of 132°06'36" W. longitude. In 2000, approximately 5,000 chinook, 112,000 summer chum, and 20,000 coho salmon are expected to return to Eastern Passage.

Crystal Lake Hatchery Chinook and Coho Salmon Terminal Fishery

Terminal Area – Wrangell Narrows-Blind Slough [5 AAC 33.381]

In the Wrangell Narrows (District 6) terminal area, the projected chinook salmon return is 6,146 adults. Under provisions of the Wrangell Narrows-Blind Slough Terminal Harvest Area Management Plan 50% of the return over 4,000 chinook (1,076) will be available for commercial troll catch in the terminal area. No terminal gillnet fishery is anticipated.

The total Crystal Lake Hatchery coho salmon return is expected to be 6,000 fish; of that, an estimated 2,200 fish will be available for sport and commercial harvest in the Wrangell Narrows-Blind Slough area. A limited number of one-day periods to harvest these returns can be expected beginning in mid to late August. Fishing time will be limited to daylight hours, openings will occur on Mondays, and gillnets will be limited to 75 fathoms in length [5 AAC 33.331 (c)(2)].

Anita Bay Terminal Area Fishery

These fish were raised to fry size at Burnett Inlet Hatchery and then released in Anita Bay. However, the Alaska Aquaculture Association, which operated the Burnett Inlet Hatchery, is currently in receivership and no longer functional. The returning fish will be harvested by the bankruptcy trustees for debt payment and no commercial terminal harvest is anticipated. This is the last year adult summer chum returns are expected for the Anita Bay remote release site and Burnett Inlet Hatchery. The returns of summer chum salmon to Anita Bay and Burnett Inlet are expected to be 40,000 and 15,000 fish, respectively. A significant proportion of those fish are liable to be caught in the traditional common property drift gillnet fisheries in Districts 6 and 8.

FISHERY CONTACTS

The following people are Commercial Fisheries contacts for this management plan:

Scott Marshall
Region 1 Supervisor
P.O. Box 240020
Douglas, AK 99824
(907) 465-4250

Scott Kelley
Region 1 Management Coordinator
P.O. Box 240020
Douglas, AK 99824
(907) 465-4250

Andy McGregor or Craig Farrington
Area Management Biologists
P.O. Box 240020
Douglas, AK 99824
(907) 465-4205

Phil Doherty, Don House,
or Scott Walker
Area Management Biologists
2030 Sea Level Drive, Suite 205
Ketchikan, AK 99901
(907) 225-5195

Bill Davidson or Dave Gordon
Area Management Biologists
304 Lake Street, Room 103
Sitka, AK 99835
(907) 747-6688

William Bergmann, Brian Lynch
Area Management Biologists
P.O. Box 667
Petersburg, AK 99833
(907) 772-3801

Randy Bachman
Fishery Biologist
P.O. Box 330
Haines, AK 99827
(907) 766-2830

Gordie Woods
Fishery Technician
P.O. Box 200
Wrangell, AK 99929
(907) 874-3822

The following is a list of telephone numbers that may be called during the gillnet fishing season to obtain recorded announcements concerning areas open to gillnet fishing:

Ketchikan	-	(907) 225-6870
Petersburg	-	(907) 772-3700
Sitka	-	(907) 747-5022
Juneau	-	(907) 465-8905